

USPS Helps Us to “Mail a Smile”



The issue date for the USPS' Mail a Smile commemorative stamps is June 1. The Forever stamps (priced at the current First Class rate, 45 cents) come in five designs in a pressure-sensitive adhesive (PSA) pane of 20 stamps and a \$15.95 Premium Stamped Postal Card Booklet of 20. This is the second set featuring the Disney•Pixar characters, the previous set being Send a Hello, which was issued in 2011, and which in turn grew out of the Art of Disney series issued from 2004 through 2008. In 2006 Disney acquired Pixar.

Mail a Smile includes five different designs that spotlight Flik and Dot from *A Bug's Life* (1998); Bob Parr (Mr. Incredible) and Dashiell “Dash” Parr from *The Incredibles* (2004), with “Dash” also shown running in the background; Nemo and Squirt from *Finding Nemo* (2003); Woody, Bullseye, and Jessie from *Toy Story 2* (1999); and Boo, Mike Wazowski, and James P. “Sulley” Sullivan from *Monsters, Inc.* (2001). The back of the stamp pane shows blue-pencil sketches of characters from these movies interspersed among text that encourages people to “mail a smile”. Art director William J. Gicker worked with Disney•Pixar to design the stamp art.

Since 1995, Pixar Animation Studios has won 29 Academy Awards. Responsible for almost every major breakthrough in computer animation, the company continues to reset the bar in technology with every film. Disney•Pixar's unique characters remind us of our fears and foibles, challenges and victories, and make us laugh while doing so.

Based on Aesop's fable “The Ant and the Grasshopper”, *A Bug's Life* is about an inventor ant who hires what he thinks are “warrior bugs” (who turn out to be circus performers) to fight off grasshoppers who have taken over his ant colony.

Toy Story 2 was a sequel to the successful *Toy Story*, and continues the adventures of a group of toys who pretend to be lifeless whenever humans are present, and focuses on Woody, a pullstring cowboy doll and a wide-ranging cast of toy characters.

Monsters, Inc. tells a tale of a city, Monstropolis, inhabited by monsters that has continuous power failures and sends its employees, known as “Scarers”, to go out and scare children in order to collect and use their screams as an energy source.

In *Finding Nemo*, an overly protective fish, searches for his abducted son Nemo, and learns to take risks as well as to let Nemo take care of himself.

The Incredibles is a 2004 computer-animated action comedy film about a family of superheroes who are forced to hide their powers after collateral damage from their good deeds leads to a “Supers Relocation Program”, forcing the Superheroes to fit in among civilians and live a normal life.

The voices in the films are a Who's Who of Hollywood.

Pixar Animation Studios is an Academy Award®-winning computer animation studio with the technical, creative and production capabilities to create a new generation of animated feature films, merchandise and other related products. Pixar's stated objective is “to combine proprietary technology and world-class creative talent to develop computer-animated feature films with memorable characters and heartwarming stories that appeal to audiences of all ages.”

Founded in 1986 after the late Steve Jobs of Apple fame purchased the computer graphics division of Lucasfilm for \$10 million and established Pixar as an independent company. Pixar has a testimonial to Jobs on its website. Its first short, *Luxo Jr.*, premiered in 1986 and received an Academy Award nomination for Best Animated Short Film. Many of its early successes were for commercials, one example being a 1994 Clio Gold Medal for its Lifesavers “Conga” commercial.

In 1995 *Toy Story* premiered as the first fully computer-animated feature film and even though it was introduced in late November, became the highest grossing film of 1995. Numerous Academy Awards and Nominations have followed.